



## A Warm Skirt for Winter

What do a duck named Pork Chop, visitors from Africa and making our world a bit 'greener' have in common? As it turns out, on this occasion, quite a bit!

Pork Chop belongs to Joan, a mobile home owner who reached out to COVER to replace the skirting around her home. Skirting is the protective border between the bottom of the home and the ground. COVER's insulated skirting system adds a framework of 2x4s and foam to the usual vinyl skin. This is one of our strategies to keep the area underneath the home warm and save the homeowners money on heating, protect the water lines and lower carbon emissions. Joan's family spent over \$6000 on heating oil last winter and these improvements will save them a great deal of money this winter.



On this project, COVER employees, volunteers and the owners were joined

by a group of visitors from Dartmouth's YALI (Young African Leaders Initiative) program. Each summer a group of young men and women come to Dartmouth to study, interact with the Upper Valley community and bring new ideas and insights back to their home countries.



The team jacked up the sagging structure, putting in posts and support beams where they could. Necessary repairs were made to a section of the water line and some rusted heat registers.

It was a hard day's work — but a great opportunity to meet new people and save money for Joan and her family.

— Jay Mead, COVER Home Repair Leader

## Making a Community Together

I recently gave a TEDx talk at Billings Farm about **community**. COVER was the first community I found when I moved to Vermont 17 years ago. I started volunteering at COVER because I wanted to learn carpentry skills, but what kept me coming back was the feeling that I belonged – me, a former attorney with no construction skills.

This is how COVER creates a community. Everyone has a place at the “table” – the homeowner, who is brave enough to ask for help. The volunteer, who is brave enough to show up to help. We are all equal partners in service and we are all lifted up together.

Through its reciprocal model of service, COVER offers homeowners the opportunity to give and receive help with dignity. Homeowners are invited to participate in the work day, making lunch if they can or simply sharing in the meal with volunteers.

Many of our homeowners had full work lives before age or physical limitations brought them to seek COVER’s help. Eventually, the volunteer who is giving their time to help may become the one who will need to ask for help.

I feel lucky to work at a place where I can blend family and work so seamlessly. Through my work at COVER, my children are learning about the importance of community – how we take care of one another and that our community is only as great as the effort we put into sustaining it.

## Updates

Diane Reinhardt has touched the lives of countless homeowners, staff, and volunteers with her remarkable compassion, dedication, and humor. I will miss Diane’s many gifts to COVER. Yet, I know that she has carefully built up the Home Repair Team so that they will continue to thrive without her. Jay Mead, who is a talented artist and instructor, has been leading volunteers on COVER projects since 2016. Jay will now be co-leading the Home Repair Team together with Kirsten Arnesen-Trunzo. Kirsten joined COVER in March as the Program Coordinator and quickly became an essential part of the Team.

It may look quiet on the building renovation front, but we are working hard behind the scenes. We hope to begin demo work in October.

COVER will be turning 25 next year! Stay tuned for anniversary events as we reflect on our past and forge our future.



—Helen Hong, COVER Executive Director  
(Pictured with her children)

## The Bike Whisperer...and Much More

The COVER Store always has a great variety of bicycles for all ages. What not many people knew until recently was that most come from one source...neighbor and volunteer extraordinaire, Rich Acker. Rich has refurbished and **donated over 400 bikes** to COVER and the Listen Center in just the last 2 years! With minimal cost and a lot of hard work, these bikes generate revenue for the store and for our COVER Home Repair operations, stay out of landfills and – maybe most importantly – provide an affordable mode of transportation for people in the Upper Valley. “Now I have a way to get to work!” exclaimed one happy shopper recently.



If you think bicycles are Rich’s only expertise, think again. He has contributed many hours to improving the efficiency of the COVER building. He’s worked to install ethernet cables, phone systems, advised on our heating and cooling systems, and so much more. As a resident of the Upper Valley since the 70s, he first started working in our building when it belonged to Catamount Brewery. He started shopping at the COVER store in 2004, then started volunteering. And we are so glad he did.

**Thank you Rich!!**

—Jay Mead, COVER Home Repair Leader

**“My day of service was an absolutely incredible experience. I went into it thinking I was giving my time to someone in need, which was something I was eager to do in my community. I exited having learned SO many new skills (I can now use a sliding, compound miter chop saw!) and more importantly, I met other people on an eye-to-eye level and built connections based on mutual kindness, vulnerability and service to each other. Thank you for a marvelous experience.”**

**—A COVER Volunteer**



*Daniel Weinreb, pictured in the red shirt, previously a COVER Volunteer Coordinator, came back to volunteer on a COVER home repair project.*

## Artist's Statement From a Shopper

When we retired, we wanted to find something creative to do together a couple of days a week. We started with some simple woodworking projects using barn boards that we had stored.

We love having birds on our property, so we decided to build some uniquely designed and decorated birdhouses. Wanting to reuse, repurpose and up-cycle, The COVER Store became **the go-to place for all things interesting** for our projects. We love our trips to COVER – we feel that we can collect all kinds of objects to use, while giving back to an organization who's mission is to sustain and support local communities.

We have collected even more objects in recent years for metal art sculpture as well. The owl is an example of a welded metal art sculpture constructed of repurposed materials. The owl is feathered in spoons, faced with gears and pliers, and stands on a stump made from small pieces of pipe, many of which came from The COVER Store.

The COVER Store is a great resource for all kinds of projects **from functional to artistic**. Check it out!

—Dave and Jo Ann Clifford, Cornish NH.



*The phrase “One man’s trash is another man’s treasure” takes on a new and wonderful meaning when looking at the stunning owl created by artists and long time COVER Store shoppers Dave and Jo Ann Clifford*

### COVER Sponsorship Opportunities

COVER relies on the generosity of our community to continue to make urgently needed home repairs and modifications for income-qualifying homeowners in the Upper Valley. COVER has created sponsorship opportunities to support these efforts and showcase our partners in new and broader ways.

Contact Helen at [director@coverhomerepair.org](mailto:director@coverhomerepair.org) to learn more or to receive a copy of our sponsorship tiers.

## All Women's Work Projects

Many women challenged themselves this summer to step into a space that is not often welcoming or comfortable for them. **Most were volunteering with COVER for the first time. Many had little to no experience.** All learned how to run chop saws, circular saws, drills, screw guns, and lots of other tools that cut wood and other materials apart to then bring them back together to make urgently needed home repairs.



Four projects were completed over seven project days. Two entry platforms and stairs, (including one with a roof!) and two installing insulated skirting on mobile homes. These women learned the difference between PT and KD lumber. They laid out and cut stair stringers. They framed and decked. They ran string lines and dug holes. They cut and installed roof rafters. They got to see the view from the roof as they installed roofing. They crawled under and around mobile homes and built framing to hold insulation. They cut 2" foil faced rigid insulation with putty knives. They ran J channel, trim kits and skirting. **They used their hands, minds and spirits to learn and improve skills, repair homes and build relationships** with each other, homeowners and very lucky staff members. They made a difference.

If this sounds appealing to you, we have a ramp scheduled in October which is an All Women's Work project. You can sign up via our website. **Come join the fun!**

—Diane Reinhardt,  
COVER Home Repair Director





Have you explored all of the different rooms  
in the COVER Store?

Because of the generosity of our community, we have an ever  
changing selection of items for sale in the store. Stop in often to  
find the treasures that are just right for you.

## Ask the Store Staff...

What items do you wish you got more donations of?

*Hammers, refrigerators, bookcases, art supplies*

What are some of the most interesting (and money

making) donations you have gotten? *Antique  
furniture in good condition, some art pieces. Our  
mascot, Ned, brings in a lot of enthusiasm from our  
social media posts. (Seen at right)*

What's your favorite repurposing that a customer

did from a cover purchase? *Toys made from lumber  
and plywood scraps*

Frequent comment in the store: *"Wow, I didn't  
know you had....!"*



## Saying Goodbye, For Now

COVER has been a moving force in my life. A river that has taken me on quite a journey. Its mission of fostering hope and building community fit with the call and need of my spirit. Simon Dennis, the first executive director, used to say the way we ran the day was more important than getting the project done. I understood that to mean **slow down, see each other, take the time to get to know one another, take the time to let people learn about each other – and build something special while doing it.**



Over the years, I have had the privilege to be part of something that has fed my spirit and hopefully helped my neighbors both physically and emotionally. I have reached a point in my life where it is time to step away from this river called COVER. It leaves me feeling wistful to see the river moving on



without me, but also strengthened because it continues to flow.

If the past is any kind of a look into the future, I will jump back into this river again and let it carry me for a little while. Its pull is too strong to stay away.

—Diane Reinhardt, COVER Home Repair Director

(pictured at left at top of steps, and above on the left)

### The COVER Home Repair Program's Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion Statement

COVER acknowledges it is easy to focus on the differences that separate us; we look to bridge those differences and share in our common human experience. COVER welcomes the unique contributions each person brings in terms of their education, opinions, culture, ethnicity, race, gender identity and expression, nation of origin, age, languages spoken, veteran's status, religion, disability, sexual orientation, recovery status, criminal histories and beliefs.

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*COVER's mission is to foster hope and build community in the Upper Valley.*

*We do this by bringing together volunteers and homeowners to complete urgently needed home repair projects, and by facilitating the reuse of household goods and building materials at The COVER Store. We envision a community where the need for home repair is an opportunity for people to come together.*

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Call the COVER Office or Store  
at 802-296-7241  
to donate or volunteer, or  
go to our website at  
www.coverhomerepair.org

**COVER Store Hours**  
**Monday-Saturday:**  
**10 am – 5 pm**  
**Sunday-Closed**

COVER  
158 S. Main Street  
White River Junction, VT 05001



“Like” us on facebook:  
COVER Home Repair & The COVER Store  
And follow us on Instagram at coverhomerepair.

“This has taken a massive weight off my shoulders and has given me much hope for the future. I was afraid that as I got older my home would fall apart to the point where I would end up homeless. I have no savings, and no prospect of savings, so this seemed like something I couldn’t solve, no matter what I did. I feel so abundantly blessed. (I even have hopes that the black fungus will stop growing in my bedroom and bathroom – what a gift!). I have met complete strangers and enjoyed their company, and I have hopes for myself (I had grown afraid of people) and for humanity.

“COVER showed me the best in people, and for this I am truly grateful. My heart is full, and that is an even greater gift than the beautiful roof that you put on my home.

“Thank you precious souls, for your work, for your gifts, and most importantly for being the beautiful, magnificent people that you are.”

—A COVER Homeowner